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Bard

Put this on the table.
An abundance of something
nobody needs. A correction
of a deflection
that brought you down
sullen to breakfast

furrows in the food
exhausted waking. Rim.
Skim the clock
for your judgment.
Morning. Everything misspelled.

20 March 2001

IT IS SPRING

And I have done with being

It happened
while I was sleeping
there was a woman
boxer bare breasted
wanting to fight
wanting me to hurt her

I could not bring
myself to strike her
and she would not hit me
we stood in sunlight
till it was different

freight trains
ran beside me
too close for comfort

heading the same direction
old red cars
maybe they killed me
after all maybe
it was time to stop being

and wake up
in Post-Existence
this thing they mean by now.

20 March 2001

because of the thing the accurate
taking care of the assembly of interaction
that senate of young intentions
splay-buttocked over smooth marble
claiming a certain beauty

bellum is the Latin word for war.

Haunt me. You haunt me.
Put this in Latin too, beloved friend.
Watch movies in Los Angeles in mythic rain

among the incantations of desire.
Love is the Latin for addiction.
Cerebrospinal. Cranial innervation
Shot to pieces. My ideas hurt,

they hurt me. Scandalous capital
chanting its dumb song of more.

He-whore, the poet said, a hinny
and a jenny, a broke banker and a banned broker,
we are just a shimmy in the boite,
a crack in the plate glass window

signifying internecine strife.
Unrest me. Imbreast me.
Civil shrike stabbing its breakfast on the nail

we live off other people dying.
It hurts to think this thinking.

20 March 2001

it is good to win something
even if it's a game

it's good to walk around outside
even if it's only on the ground

it's good to look up into the sky
even if you have to share it with me

some weather coming — good
to get wet even if it's only rain.

21 March 2001

the space or the desire

blocked, from cuneic impostures
old runes old epyllion the little
epic of the lost story I bet your life on

to read the Hero Log
across the brittle dark

in Baltic fogs or split the log
find him there as usual
the face in the fire
is always him

the moon in the water
gleam of her hip

we can lose anything
except the story
everything else we can make or find again
but the story once lost stays lost forever

sometimes lost in the telling too.

21 March 2001

SOUVENIR OF TORONTO

Basket basket fine live crabs
a spill of tonal language crosses les trottoirs
switch light blue blur
Bloor

and then the semaphore
live crabs live sea urchins
stracchino cheese the mild
sea gar, the devilfish the skate

begin me slow
I am here to be a painting
I climbed up out of the ground
Using only colors as my rungs

Until you see me
I am only here
And then I really am
A treasure of a deep sea locker sprung
Open from the weight of the implicit gold

Precious pressure.
Break the door
The party's music is too loud
Who needs all these people when I have you,

They pour cream into my bell.
Or is it the other way

I stand on the roof of nobody's house
And beat a stick against the sky

Nothing happens but everybody hears it

Everybody hears it all the time.

22 March 2001

Saying the names of them
Quietly to myself
A species of magic
Like holding a small
Rock for a long time in your hand.

22 March 2001

RUSTICA

and then new things come
a farmer to his shuck
and a shorn sun

stare too long
embarrassed cloud
everything gone

and the land too will know me
having no choice but understanding.

22 March 2001

THE FISHERWOMAN

The fisherwoman went out alone that day
Wasn't even dawn yet the coast was pale

But that was surf the sky was dark
The boy who goes out with her was not there

Sick or romancing someone or gone home
He was not there at the little jetty

He did not raise the sail or shove the land back with his heel
So she went out alone this morning

It mattered very little to this young fisherwoman
Whether she was alone or together

We're always alone in the important hour
The one that's coming and she raised the sail

After she rowed out into the lagoon
And down she went along the quiet sea

To come to her hour. Things wait for us.
Even there on the empty horizon where the dark

Meets another just like itself
Something a boat is meant to find.

She did not look around her as she sailed
Did not look up. She kept her eyes

Fixed on a mirror laid flat in front of her
On a little table where her wine cup stood

A mirror that showed the stars
She steered by the stars stored in the glass

And where she went the stars were going too
But always left when she went right

And each of the brave heroes of the night
Stood inside out above her

Hunters and harriers no more
Because a woman when she sails alone

Is the only upright presence in the world
The rest is just a sky full of bright mistakes

That lead her to the truth
The empty place inside the ocean

From which the fish are spoken she pretends to want
Find catch and bring home squirming silver

And leaves on the dockside later for her neighbors
When she comes back home and time

Has turned into something as paltry as the day.
She takes her mirror home and hangs it up

And black it is and always will be,
A glass that only knows how to show the night.

23 March 2001
[from a dream last night]

But can we dream apart the brick
facing of the skirting wall that hems us in?
A house should be a habit of the light
a way to forgive the wind. You can work
anywhere your marvelous hands
work in to language the images spelled out
wide winged like chain link or a brown dog.
Things examine dictionaries while we sleep.

23 March 2001

FEAR OF PRONOUNS

You pronounce me
and it hurts

there are some
who cannot even speak.

23 March 2001

and from the news today:

“And the Earth and all its contents, including every person on the planet, are dark matter too, he said. Dark matter is anything that is not luminous enough to be seen from across the galaxy.”

STANZAS OF VITRIOL

Merovingians when the Arabs come
Bred the light to spill from lotuses
Damask reticules with old zinc pennies
Cure sympathy leather policy
Ordure tanning vats to speak the skin.

Nobody home. Music close, too loud
For whom. The women. The object's
Little, a convulsion spread the hills
Apart we find our way inside the earth.
But is it this earth. Is it this way in.

24 March 2001

They are waiting by the pasture with their knives
And no one knows

Or the moon is waiting for them
Over the black horse's back

On the street no place to sit
Lean against the fire hydrant lean against the wall

Hang your shirt on a shadow
And walk half naked through the sunshine

There is no sun there is only a street
A street among people looking at you not looking at you

There is no light in the world except a street.

25 March 2001

caution me no caught a canyon captured a call
cantharid trying to get trying to ketch caught cough
caul trying to ket jkogg coff out oud ogf of
kykle cyu cu cyle cycle tryuing to ghet
everything is spelling don't believe me end of the day
trying to come through and get out of the cycle of one sound
is no5 easy one is caught in bnumbers also Mne Seraphim we will nebver
understand because the hand led

the hand lef Blake to commit an error not yet possible
he typed M instead of B because they are near one another on the keyboard
hje had no keyboard fuck you neither to you you're kust just reading this
stupid

book

don't you understand Blake was already typing his hands were making the
gestures with the burin that later women or men with their brass typewriters
right typers would make with their Underwoods their Royals the shiny thing
in Lamb House James Rye Henry talked to

some man moved his hanmds\\

end of the day a terror the man kept saying it over and over
what would the African mean by over and cober the cen of the day?
End of the day.

Juliana UI WANTED to know to bed nmyth who? Does she ever
understand she does and doesn't care that's the loss of the bear the scuttling

Opf the blues hi[p/

All the mysteries of the ages are angels' typos.

Miniseries mysteries

Every mistake a taken miss
A glorious angel Girl
Spread all her soft wings wide
Over the poemsphere

Unrehearsed joyory, glad
Down glebe or a tense barn
Spilled in our laps
Principessa with no principles

Why wove you!

In the Mosuo language there are no words for father, illegitimacy, single mother, widow, jealousy, virgin, or monogamy. The explanation is simple: these concepts do not exist. The dominant role of women in Mosuo society is a unique remnant of a life that was once common in this part of China. As ancient wars took away the men, women assumed control.

The dogs were different then
They looked differently at what we did
More interested they were
As if we hadn't worn them out
With what we wanted from them

Want want want they bark to imitate

[25 March 2001]

ANNUNCIATION

Christ's conception Carlo Crivelli
in a dark corner of a dark
room light finds her

likes her licks her
a few words onto her lips and

and everything. This child
is born to illustrate dying

to save us from death it is said
save us from being born again.

It is the feast day of it, data, if we
can see our shadow we will never
have to be born again

if we see our shadow and know it
for what it is and isn't

say hello and let it go

from a dark corner to a pale wall
to a cracked window to a seamless light

the kind of late winter brightness they call the angel.

25 March 2001

GUILTY CONSCIENCE

1.

wake up growling
be Brooklyn
squirrel hubcap pie
a dark dork and a dim
preacher we are Irish
we are Aberdeen
our Lady of burnt down.

2.

I am love,
Give me all your vowels

I hear you breathing
neat as a little goat
soft under the consentings of the light

3.

because of these distresses the working poor
spend their weeks reeving the spavined shore
digging for dimes I mean clams the small change of the sea
be careful with me I am as frail as hydrogen
trumpeter, I am the wall that cannot fall
Lake Van and patriarchy where do you loin these voids?

4.

altimeter of gas tanks flying on pure glue
the art scene shivers with revision ravishment

because you woke and when you woke
sat naked a little easy on the edge of the bed
and did a ritual your teacher said
my mind won't stop licking at your skin

the name of this is ever after
Philadelphia
angel Tetons
Dutch girl primary shield a pale red morning

Snow after breakfast.

26 March 2001

acrostic chalices collect his blood by night
soak stamps off paper to use again

there is jealousy in heaven that part of it
the little gods live in
 angry and measuring
measuring always the thigh fat and the bone
slicing sunlight into portions paying taxes

the stamps are blue and now belong to you
you use them to give your words away
the image: *woman borrows stamp from one
boyfriend to send letter to another*

it is from the Sumerian Dream Book that I dream
and quote the text as waking as if it meant my life
begins just because the sun does something

unmeasured overmeasured and very blue
and the Paris pavement's wet with stars

27 March 2001

From the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Wittgenstein's airplane
Crashes near Bolzano.
The little jet reactors
At the tip of each propeller fin
Went fast enough
But the mountains reach up
And bring him down.
He lives in a cave
Captured by Italian soldiers
In white insulated clothes.
Ungaretti sits beside him
Neither one knowing the other.
Wittgenstein listens
To the sound of dawn on the blue
Slopes dusk on the red slopes
Listens to Ungaretti saying
Less and less on slips of paper.
Finally immensity
Illuminates them both.
When someone is turned
Completely into light
He forgets everything he doesn't
Need to know. They go
Their separate ways.
But language is always listening
And the world, mere echo
Of what we say, was changed.

27 March 2001

The exploding briefcase under Hitler's table
brings nobody back to life, maybe shortens
the war, what is it I want to say about this,

the exploding briefcase under Hitler's table
wakes me up but doesn't tell me anything
or nothing works, explosions come and go

implode back into history, a bunch of feathers
lunatic ornithologists try to name in sequence,
as if we knew that a could cause b then where

would we be near the end of the alphabet, allied
planes bombing everything in sight, Russians
crawling out of folklore to rape real cities,

the briefcase that exploded under Hitler's table
was filled with Rilke's poems, Heine's poems,
Kant's minor treatises, a play by Büchner,

a letter from Thomas Mann to Pfitzner,
Wittgenstein's blueprints for that house in Vienna,
with postcards of Hyde Park from Roosevelt,

nobody knows, who are any of these people now,
dust and bones, the briefcase under my own table
blew up yesterday or will blow up tomorrow,

everything we believed is false, everything we wanted
killed us, everything we thought was ours
was just the shadow of some birds overhead

who left their feathers on our table, got baked
into our bread, still flutter in our heads, sometimes
pretty like the dappled walls of old Venice houses

from the glimmer of the long defiled canals.

[28 March 2001]

Let's see what my hands have to say
There is a distance we can rouse
To stand between us — that way we can add
Shouting to the repertory, shout intimacies
Across fascist piazzas in harsh sunlight
There, where the citron still consents to ripen.

28 March 2001

The time that I is now

1.

Find everywhere the frequency of small things
a magic pathway crossroads

carve into the soft white tree
the number of his wound

on Levi's tombstone his Auschwitz tattoo.

Christ's wounds drip blueblack from the sudden rose,

no, just a handkerchief balled up, wet, a flower
from the pocket

2.

Drive a staff of willow in the mud
and believe whatever it tells you

Wave your arms in the air
so your fingertip strum the stars
and leash one to another

and they will throw a woven shadow on the road
which will trap anybody's feet

any stranger any love

the one you want
stumbling, slipping on star juice,

you thief, you sentimentalist.

29 March 2001

arbalest no astrolabe no armillary sphere
is what the man meant on the radio
the transistor built into your head with too many vowels
you could fly to Zurich you could take drugs
but it wouldn't stop the words that know how to find you

some words know how to find you

you are a man like other men
you like some people and dislike others
there is nothing unusual about you at all
presumably everybody hears voices in their heads
why do you worry about it why do you write them down

translated from the Arabic from the other side of the sand
where trees begin again coughing from the buses exhaust
and the stars are invisible at midnight so many crimson signs

you are stuck here with your money like a man.

29 March 2001

I had a father you
Had one too a mother
Somewhere in the picture
She had a vanity
With a triptych mirror
I sat between the leaves of it
And disappeared
Into the multiplicity of me
Not one of them real
Bone of her fingernail brush
Sleek of her orangewood sticks
Cotton of her cotton
And no face for me
Among all the faces
Nothing that could open its mouth
A mirror with wings
Carried me away from myself.

29 March 2001

who am I this wilder
water beads on bare twigs
aligned to slide or fall
everything is orderly
except me

 who claim like you
to live inside the climate
and be a citizen of gravity

in trouble since the day I spoke

for language is the law
language to which the infant will
proposes constantly exceptions

be latin with me
and flex the abs deep in abstract
because I want the body of your thinking

and still don't know who I am
this rainy day
the light inside the water falling
the irritating philosophic quest inside the light

any you is wilderness enough.

30 March 2001

The size of the city compels a certain circumspection
in the face of the usual generalizations about amenity and crime
resisting the Dantescan pleasures of condemning
all the big cities that contrive to live without me.
Or even you. Umbrellas are in vogue again
as if the weather needed our approval, and it does.
Down there in the circles of hell we find Newark in rain,
Portland in sunshine, Indianapolis any time at all.
Just to mention fatal interviews, houses the muses
prefer to shun. But cities in general are worth their
railroads and rivers, immigrants and discotheques,
most cities are made out of bread and salt.

30 March 2001

exaggerate the ziggurat
that tall cigar that
spelunks the Babel sky

Nimrod or Numword
built no terraced travesty
like Dioces

we burrow in pure light we grovel like gods

he built a single beanstalk
cabbagestalk pipestem stick
it up the sky

he built a word and spoke it

he built a sound and let it fall
down around us to this day

30 March 2001

THEOLOGY

A way to measure the former face of things
before there was a world to look at
before the sitcom reruns we call History
just a microphone dangling from the clouds.

30 March 2001

and if it vanished, and it could vanish,
leaving nothing, or else a congeries of remembered things
strewn across the web of space
trembling with no longer meaningful messages

and the magnet does not love us any more.

31 March 2001

there are spokes to every wheel
whether you see them or not

they are made of wire or wood or words
and they make things spin and hold
their rims firmly to the patient ground

friction, just friction makes things move

so when she lies down beside her mother
and talks what seems like the tender disaster of desire
into the dark bedroom then turns over
and buries her face in her mother

holding, holding, for a moment
nothing spins, the dark holds, morning
infiltrates the bleak city and the women sleep.

31 March 2001